

NSA reviews completed

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
20 October 1973

State Dept. review completed

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INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

DIA review(s) completed.

MIDDLE EAST

ON-FILE NSC RELEASE
INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

Situation Report Number 61
(As of 2230 EDT)

THE MILITARY SITUATION

GENERAL

1. Israeli spokesmen expressed growing confidence today as the Israeli force on the west bank of the canal expanded its bridgehead. A senior Egyptian intelligence officer, however, denied Israeli claims of successes and suggested that the Egyptians were preparing a major effort against the Israeli forces on the west bank. Late today the Israelis apparently staged a raid against the Egyptian naval base at Hurghada on the Red Sea about 200 miles south of the Suez Canal. Egypt has denied that the raid took place. There is no information concerning action on the east bank of the canal.

2. The Syrian front was relatively quiet today. The Israelis slightly expanded their salient in the area between Sasa and Tell Aantar. There are indications that additional Arab forces may be sent to southern Syria. Jordan is preparing to send a second armored brigade to Syria and the Iraqis reportedly intend to send four divisions.

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THE EGYPTIAN FRONT

3. Israeli forces on the west bank of the canal continued to expand their bridgehead. Tel Aviv showed growing confidence during the day and spokesmen talked of being on the way to "destroying the Egyptian Army." According to a senior Israeli military official, Israeli units have now bypassed elements of the Egyptian 4th Armored Division which was reportedly badly mauled earlier today. In the southern region of the west bank, the Israelis claim to have surrounded a number of small Egyptian units, and Tel Aviv says that Israeli tanks are firing across the canal at Egyptian forces on the east bank. Tel Aviv reports that its forces on the west bank captured 50 SAM sites today. There is no information concerning developments on the east bank of the canal.

4. In contrast to the optimistic Israeli reports, a senior Egyptian intelligence officer stated that he toured the west bank today and was able to use roads that the Israelis claim to have cut. He did, however, admit that Israeli forces controlled Fayid, and that the Egyptians had lost 60 tanks in today's fighting. The official seemed to display little worry over the turn of events and stated that it is the Israelis who should be concerned. His later remarks suggested that the Egyptians plan to mount a major assault to cut off the Israelis fighting on the west bank, and he promised to give full details "in three or four days."

5. On the basis of all available information, we do not believe that the Egyptians have either sufficient forces on the west bank or the three or four days necessary to prepare a major operation against the Israeli force. The Israelis have the initiative at the moment and the Egyptians are responding to Israeli moves.

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THE SYRIAN FRONT

7. Action was comparatively light on the Syrian front today as the Syrians and their Arab allies apparently continued to put pressure on the Israeli salient, but did not mount a major coordinated counter-attack. The Israelis expanded the salient slightly in the area between Sasa and Tell Aantar. Israeli Defense Minister Dayan's statement today that the majority of the Syrian Army had not been put out of action indicates that significant forces--re-equipped by the Soviet air and sea lift and reinforced by non-Syrian units--still face the Israelis in the north.

8. Additional Arab forces may soon join those in southern Syria. King Husayn is reluctantly preparing to send a second armored brigade to Syria, providing that the brigade and the one sent earlier will operate under a Jordanian commander. The Lebanese military attache in Baghdad said that the Iraqis plan eventually to commit four divisions to the Syrian front and that the Baghdad-Damascus road was packed with troops, tanks, and trucks on 19 October.

ISRAELI SHIPPING THREATENED

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[redacted] the Israelis have asked the US naval attache if there were any US ships in the vicinity of the Hanna. Israeli naval action on the Egyptian coast may be intended to prevent Egyptian missile boats from intercepting the Hanna.

JORDAN

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11. [redacted] the Jordanian Air Force is particularly anxious to obtain pitot tubes since three Hawker-Hunters are currently grounded due to faulty equipment.

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[redacted] One possibility is to transport some equipment via Kuwait, [redacted]

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SOVIET AIRLIFT

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EGYPT

13. [REDACTED]

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a "large number of palefaces in mufti" arrived in Cairo on 14-15 October. The group, estimated between 200-300 men, moved into apartments, which until July 1972, had been occupied by Soviet military advisers.

ARAB OIL

14. Algiers radio announced late tonight that Algeria has suspended all oil shipments to the US and is reducing its oil production by 10 percent. Algerian oil exports to the US have been running about 150,000 barrels per day, or less than one percent of daily US oil consumption. Saudi Arabia, Libya, Abu Dhabi, and Bahrain have previously announced a total embargo on US oil shipments and other Arab producers are almost certain to follow.

ARAB REACTIONS

15. Although the radios of the Arab states have broadcast reports of Secretary Kissinger's trip to Moscow, the only commentary yet received comes from Libya. Radio Tripoli said that it was surprised by the US-Soviet discussions, and suggested that the aim of the talks was "to make us desist from liberating our lands." Tripoli added that "the super powers must not impose on us steps that are not in the benefit of our (Arab) nation."

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